



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Governor proclaims day of recognition for child care teachers** **- - Recommendations to improve early learning bolster workforce competitiveness - -**

**Richmond** – By proclamation, Governor Mark R. Warner has designated Oct. 22 to be observed as a day of recognition for Virginia's child care providers. Acknowledging the importance of these early care and education providers in the healthy growth and development of children and in the lives of Virginia's families, the proclamation states, "...it is important to recognize and reward the efforts of those who are building Virginia's future, child by child, day by day."

Child Care Provider Recognition Day gives parents and families the opportunity to show appreciation to their providers and to learn more about the characteristics they should look for when selecting a child care provider.

Why is selecting the right child care provider so important? Children's brains experience an extraordinary period of growth and development in the first years of life, establishing a foundation of physical, social, emotional and cognitive strength which helps prepare them for school success and life success. The more understanding teachers and parents have regarding the developmental stages and needs of young children as they grow, the more opportunity they have to support healthy growth and learning for young children in these critical years.

Stimulating play and safe, nurturing environments in which to explore gives children the kind of quality experiences that result in healthy development and optimal growth. Because 62 percent of children under age 6 in Virginia have all parents working, Virginia families count on various forms of child care to enable them to go to work. In taking the step to make sure that their child care provider and setting are of high quality, families not only provide for safe keeping of their children, but also for rich educational and social growth and development.

Child care providers, then, not only serve as an important economic support to enable parents to work, but more importantly, play a substantive role in helping families establish the educational and social-emotional foundation for Virginia's young children. On Oct. 22, child care professionals across the Commonwealth are recognized for their noble and distinctive contributions to families and children.

In addition to this proclamation, Governor Warner has implemented a number of initiatives designed to provide support and investments for the strongest start for Virginia's young children, including the New Parent Kit, a resource for the parents of every new baby born in the Commonwealth; expansion of health insurance coverage through FAMIS; and the Early Childhood Partnership grants, which strengthen the capacity of local communities to provide high quality early care and education.

To learn more about selecting a child care provider, visit [www.dss.virginia.gov/family/selectcare.html](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/selectcare.html).

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